

BLOOMINGTON ARTS COMMISSION (BAC)

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July 10, 2013 meeting, McCloskey Conference Room

ATTENDING: Peter Jacobi, Jean Kautt , Martina Celerin, Mary Norman, Jan Grant, Alain Barker, Sally Gaskill, Abby Henkel, Craig Widen

ABSENT: Lynn Schwartzberg, Mary Norman, Paul Sturm

EX OFFICIO: Miah Michaelson (City staff liaison)

GUESTS: Talisha Coppock (Bloomington Convention Center), Mike McAfee (Convention and Visitors Bureau), Diane Buzzell (Cardinal Stage Co.)

Jan Grant called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

PRESENTATION RE: THE PROPOSED FOOD AND BEVERAGE TAX

The meeting began with a presentation by Talisha Coppock. She explained that she has managed the Convention Center for 20 years and Craig is on the board. It is a 1923-renovated auto assembly plant. It is a well-built building but it is too small for our current needs. The use of the building has increased over time and the Convention Center has acquired the parking lot across from the B-line trail. The Convention Center now owns 6 acres for Convention Center projects. It is taken time to assemble this land. They are now looking for a source of funding for the Convention Center expansion. They considered many options including property tax and income tax, but they chose the food and beverage tax. The reason they chose that particular tax was because that is the industry that benefits the most from this expansion. There are many functions that take place in the Convention Center that are ready to grow - for example, the Chamber of Commerce meetings have increased from 350 people attending to over 1000. The Convention Center does many not-for-profit events, about 600 of those per year. Approximately 40% of the Convention Center's business is with corporate businesses. They also do a lot of not-for-profit fundraisers as well as about 40 IU functions. There is a large variety of local events that use it as well as a lot of out-of-towners that use it.

Mike McAfee continued the presentation and noted that 1.3 million people came to Bloomington last year. The hotels are full on weekends and three more are being built. Mike noted that if we don't do the building downtown it will likely happen on the west side of Bloomington. This growth in Bloomington will happen with or without us i.e. a Convention Center will be built but by implementing this tax it will be a way of capturing that industry in downtown Bloomington. He noted that thousands of people visit Bloomington per week. He also noted that hotels are 70% full on weekend and 40% full during the week. Peter asked, "what do you want us to do?" Mike replied that he wants us to support this project. The study in 2009 established that the food and beverage tax is feasible and encouraged the use of it as a tool for tourism economic development. Miah noted that by expanding the Convention Center we are actually expanding capacity for Bloomington art, thereby allowing us to hold more art events, including visual and performance art events. She noted that this is an opportunity for the arts community that won't be available to our community easily in the future. Mike noted that we are the second most sought after Convention Center destination right after Indianapolis. And right now we are too small. Alain mentioned that we should really consider community integration, not only city but also IU, in a meaningful way in this project. Talisha reminded the committee that there is a lot of art integration that has happened in the past including the mural by Laura Moore and 14 pieces from local visual artists are prominently displayed at the Convention Center. The presence of this art has given life to this venue, people are always talking about it. Alain noted that the inclusion of art needs to be integral to the concept of the expansion from the beginning. Sally asked if it would always be civic-oriented venue. Talisha answered yes. Jean asked whether a new site has been determined. Talisha mentioned at the land map is on the website. Mike noted that some scope planning has been done but expects that to be a year-long planning project. This would include approaching private investors to establish a new hotel. Jean asked if the restaurants support this tax. Talisha said that the response has been mixed with bars being more concerned. Mike said that some of the negative response has included lack of confidence by citizens, fear of big government, and that people don't want more taxes. Jean asked where else in Indiana are they using this tax. Mike answered that the food and beverage tax is used in 24 different places, including cities and counties. Craig commented that because the idea that this tax could affect voter attitudes, politicians are seeing how the wind is blowing before they commit and

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inform their constituents. Peter mentioned that he is in favor of the expansion that suggests that the organizers tailor the presentation to specific groups. He personally is not concerned about hotels but he does care greatly about art. Alain said that if aspects of the expansion have to do with art then he would be happy to help with the conversations. Talisha noted that emails to council members are available and she encourages us to contact them with our opinions. Jan noted that artists and arts organization could benefit from this expansion especially as far as space. Jean noted that with the I-69 arriving on the west side of town there will be many jobs, chain stores, and monies that will be geared to the west side of town. Sally asked, "what are the next steps?" Talisha suggested encouraging the Council to take a vote soon. Miah said that there is still the time for the Council to hear from the people. Talisha noted that pushing the vote to a later date could result in it being presented to a new group of council members. Martina asked if we, as a group, can make a statement of support for the Convention Center. Miah said that she would speak to the city to see whether we should be involved in making a statement. Miah also mentioned that if the tax does pass then we should consider what role the BAC would like to have in the subsequent process.

MODIFICATIONS TO GRANT PROPOSALS (CARDINAL SATGE AND BLOOMINGTON CHAMBER SINGERS)

Jan introduced Diane from Cardinal Stage Company and explained that she will clarify the modifications to grant proposal. Diane noted that IU Opera received the rights to *Breaking Away* while Cardinal, unbeknownst to them, was writing the grant proposal. Alain asked, "when did that happen?" Diane replied, "six months ago." Diane said that they had put a lot of energy into writing and preparing for the production of *Breaking Away* and have now changed gears to writing and nutrition-focused musical for elementary school kids. However, it is not likely to be presented until the 2014-15 season (the themester theme for 2014 will be nutrition). They are also working on the Bobby Knight play but that will not be available this year either. They are also working on two other musicals but neither of these are Bloomington-themed. One of these four plays will be worked on this year and it will affect the same number of people. Jan summarized that what's effectively changed is not the timeframe, nor the scope but the play, but the production will not be Bloomington-centric. Abby asked for clarification: the funding for this year would still be for a reading of a play, and that the \$950 would be covering expensed for the actors for the public, ticketed reading. Craig asked if they have a target month. Diane replied February 2014. Jan asked whether it was within the time line for the grants. Miah replied that it depends on when the project begins. Jan asked the committee if the commissioners feel that they have enough information to vote on awarding the money for the grant. Miah said that since we have another applicant with some issues she suggested that we discuss the second situation and vote on both. Jan noted that next is an issue concerning the Bloomington Chamber Singers. Miah explained that they have an opportunity to perform something else and move the funded program into the late spring 2014. Jan asked if that affects their ability to apply for the spring project. Abby noted that they could theoretically apply for another grant if it is for another project. Alain asked that if the funds are allocated and if they are removed do the monies go away. Miah noted that the money is out already and that we have never had a grant modification request in the past. Peter clarified that we are voting as to whether to let the organizations keep the money or return it. Miah said that if we request the monies to be returned it would not go back into the grant fund pot. Craig noted that our process is set up to send all of the monies out at once. Miah commented that the grants are too small to separate into installments but if the budget increases then we should consider that. Alain moved to accept both modifications; Peter seconded. Majority (6) were in favor, 2 were opposed (Craig and Jan); motion carried.

Jan re-directed the meeting back to the minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from Jun 12, 2013

Two minor revisions in the submitted minutes from last month. Peter moved to accept the minutes with revisions; Sally seconded; motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT – report by Craig via email.

Unchanged from last month

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STAFF REPORTS – reports by Miah, as per email.**Garage Names**

Sally asked why are the garage names being changed. Miah replied that the names are more wayfinding for visitors. Public should see a change mid-August. The city is planning to use attractive signage.

Imagine Bloomington

Abby asked for a clarification of the role of Imagine Bloomington/GPP. Miah explain that it's the city's version of a vision statement within the growth policies plan and elaborated that the new goals for arts and culture are being voted on and directed us to a link in the staff reports that leads to the city website. Jean expanded that imagine Bloomington, in a nutshell, is collecting public thoughts on how Bloomington is maintained and develops. Sally noted that Joanna Woronowicz has a blog that's relevant to arts and cultural development.

OLD BUSINESS**Changes in grant application**

Miah presented the highlighted potential changes to the grant application and showed us what changes were made based on what we discussed last month. The committee had some additional comments. Miah will make the changes. Jan called for a motion to accept the changes. Craig made the motion; Jean seconded; the motion was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS**Focus Topic**

For this month's focus topic Jan suggested that we continue going through aspects of the grant review process. Twice each year when the arts organizations come in to talk to us we are looking for clarification on their grant proposals. We have a "we are here to help" attitude. However, some of our questions are more like comments in that they made a mistake in the grant proposals as opposed to looking for clarification. Some of the commissioners are mentioning what they felt was missing and not actually asking questions. Abby likes the idea of having written comments. Alain suggested that what Jan was saying is that this should be a clarification session and not a feedback session. It was noted that feedback can be hurtful but it can also be constructive. Miah expressed concern that we are slipping into a process where we are attempting to fix the project and that's not the time to do it. Alain was concerned that by removing aspects of the conversation it would take away from the verbal exchange. Craig wants to make sure that we are welcoming and not a caustic environment. Miah mentioned that it also gives the commission exposure.

The commission agreed that 25 would be the number of grant applicants as a cut off before we consider first and second reader strategy for evaluating the grants.

Meeting was adjourned by Jan at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Martina Celerin